

## Practice

by Alyssa Bourgeois

I didn't realize I was holding my breath  
until I started playing

It just flowed out of me

One shaky note at a time, quietly quivering,  
like a quail hiding from a hunter

I was scared, it was the beginning, shame

Slowly starting, scales and arpeggios

A warm-up, more even

Rhythm and rhyme

Etudes and preludes

Courage comes slowly, not a mouse's squeak  
but a lion's roar

A fire burns in my heart, spreading through my bones;  
an inferno

Bach and Beethoven

Mozart and Handel

I am a tiger coursing through the jungle;  
powerful and strong

I am a swan gliding gracefully across the lake,  
barely making a ripple

I am an eagle flying boldly through the sky,  
diving through the clouds; free

No one can stop me,  
I don't care what other people think

I am the music and the music is me.